

NWR - Newark Human Rights Comm  
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MAYOR'S COMMISSION

ON

GROUP RELATIONS

ANNUAL REPORT

1956

LEO P. CARLIN, MAYOR

NEWARK, N. J.

## FOREWORD

The Mayor's Commission on Group Relations completes its second year of work since its reactivation under the new form of government with a sense of pride in being one of the 76 public agencies throughout the country working for the improvement of intergroup relations on the local level. Whatever degree of success it has realized is a credit to the cooperation of the public and private human relations agencies, the many civic, social and service clubs, the religious institutions, the citizens and other agencies of the City of Newark. The Commission is grateful for this support in helping to make Newark a living example of the democratic ideals upon which this country was founded.

This Fourth Annual Report is a brief summary of the highlights of our activities in 1956. It concludes with a statistical survey of our continuing efforts to resolve the misunderstandings and relieve the tensions which result from prejudice and discrimination.

The Commission regretfully acknowledges the resignation of its chairman, C. Willard Heckel, assistant dean of Rutgers University Law School. Dean Heckel's untiring and faithful service to the Commission and Newark community has been an inspiration to all of us. The Mayor's Commission on Group Relations unanimously voted to pay public tribute to Dean C. Willard Heckel for a job well done.

Lt. William G. Geraghty of the Newark Police Department was appointed in October, 1956, to replace James E. Kerwin.

## MAYOR'S COMMISSION ON GROUP RELATIONS

Benjamin A. Collier	C. Willard Heckel	Mrs. Charles F. McCarthy
Dr. Antoinette Fried	Jerry Leopaldi	James M. Melnychuk
William G. Geraghty	Alexander Mark	Mrs. Marion D. Murrill
Philip Hoggard	Phil O. Mayer	Hilton J. Otero
Michael Paskas		Samuel Weitzman

### Staff:

Daniel S. Anthony, Director	Mrs. Lena Deane, Sr. Clerk-Stenographer
Walter D. Chambers, Asst. Director	Mrs. Rebecca F. Mittelman, Sr. Clerk-Stenographer

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## SPECIAL EVENTS

The Newark Fair Practice Ordinance which created the Mayor's Commission on Group Relations reads in part: "The powers and duties of the Commission shall be to formulate and carry out educational programs that will aid in eliminating and preventing all types of prejudice and discrimination based on race, creed, color, national origin or ancestry". To this end the Commission, in cooperation with other community organizations, has sponsored several programs and activities which have made for a greater understanding and improvement of intergroup relations in this city. A few of these program activities will be reported on the following pages to describe the scope and nature of the educational job of the Mayor's Commission.

### BROTHERHOOD WEEK

For the fourth consecutive year the Commission conducted a Fair Employment Practices Week observed in conjunction with Brotherhood Week. Informational materials in this area of civil rights were distributed throughout the city. The Staff and Commissioners planned and participated in human relations programs for various community organizations. (See page 7).

At its regular February meeting the Commission presented a film forum showing two of the latest films on fair employment practice and changing neighborhoods. An audience of one hundred community leaders and interested citizens attended this meeting.

Other activities during Brotherhood Week were radio panel discussions on stations WAAT and WNJR. Commissioners served as panelists on these programs and informed the people in this area on the work of the Mayor's Commission on Group Relations, the New Jersey Anti-Discrimination Law and ways in which all citizens may help to carry out this law.

### MAYOR LEO P. CARLIN AND CIVIC GROUPS OBSERVE ELEVENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNITED NATIONS

For the fourth consecutive year, the Commission was designated by Mayor Carlin as the official city agency to coordinate the observance of United Nations Week. This city-wide, all week celebration involved one hundred cooperating organizations of the various racial, ethnic and religious groups in Newark. This year's celebration featured the United States Marine Band, representatives of member nations of the United Nations and participants from local agencies in an evening program held at the Mosque Theatre. Two thousand citizens attended this program.

The visiting United Nations dignitaries participated in other activities on this day which included: Viewing the display of the exhibits and booths on United Nations activities which the cooperating agencies had set up in the Rotunda of City Hall; the rededication of United Nations Square at which clergymen of the three major faiths participated; a reception held at the Newark Museum to open the International Children's Art Exhibit. Another outstanding feature of their visit was a tour of Christopher Columbus Homes and a dinner prepared for the representatives by the Tenants' Council of the project.

This year's celebration was one of the most memorable in Newark's history, having been sponsored by the cooperative efforts of hundreds of citizens who enjoyed four months of planning and work in a democratic atmosphere of good human relations.

#### MAYOR'S CONFERENCE

In July, Mayor Leo P. Carlin invited thirty-five civic and religious leaders to participate in a conference to explore effective ways and means of preventing intergroup tensions in Newark. This meeting was called following several tension incidents which occurred during late spring indicating some breakdown in the harmonious relationships among the various groups which make up our community.

The outcome of the deliberations of this conference were summarized in a mandate from the Mayor to the Commission to determine if tensions do exist at the community level and to recommend corrective measures.

The Commission formulated and put into action a three-point program to carry out this directive from the Mayor and conference. The program consists of a two-fold approach: fact-finding and education. The steps in this job are outlined as follows:

1. A series of Commission subcommittee meetings with neighborhood groups, community organizations and block organizations to invite citizens to express their views on the assets or liabilities of their particular neighborhood and to make recommendations for the improvement of intergroup relations.
2. A one or two-day institute on program planning to acquaint the leaders and program chairmen of civic, social, community and religious organizations with films, speakers and program services available to them on the topic of community and intergroup relations.
3. A ten session course in Leadership Training in Community Relations held at the YM-YWCA to equip citizens with the most effective techniques and tools for dealing with practical community problems.

### CENTRAL WARD NEIGHBORHOOD CONFERENCE

Late in 1956 the Commission presented a three-point program to Mayor Carlin as a follow-up on the conference called by him to discuss the matter of intergroup relations in Newark. One feature of this approved program was a series of meetings in the various sections of the city to explore the status of intergroup relations on a community or neighborhood level. These meetings are so directed that the people are given every opportunity to express themselves on what they consider to be the particular assets or liabilities in their neighborhood.

The Central Ward Neighborhood Conference, sponsored in cooperation with the Urban League of Essex County, Fuld Neighborhood House and the Central Newark Community Council, was the largest and most successful meeting. Two hundred and fifty persons participated in this conference held at Fuld House located in the Rev. William P. Hayes Homes. A panel of specialists briefly presented a statement of facts on the schools, housing, city services, welfare services, recreation and intergroup relations. The feature of the conference was the small, round-table discussions during which the residents of the Central Ward were able to express themselves on the pressing problems of their neighborhood. A questionnaire covering the above factors was filled out by the participants.

A detailed report has been drafted from the compilation of the questionnaire and the reports of the round-table discussions.

This completed summary report will be made available to local private and public agencies and individuals concerned with the problems and improvement of Newark's neighborhoods as soon as it has been approved by this Commission.

### COOPERATION WITH NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATIONS

Throughout 1956, the Commission has actively cooperated with the many community councils and neighborhood organizations which have been functioning in the various sections of Newark. These citizen groups have been devoted to the aims of creating a spirit of neighborliness through the informal, friendly structure of their organizations and enlisting community cooperation in meeting common neighborhood problems. Many such groups have been forming in other urban communities throughout the country and have been considered by specialists a great boon to the reduction of intergroup relations problems on the neighborhood level.

The Commission has maintained a close liaison with these groups and has rendered services whenever needed as a part of its educational program and its policy of community participation.

These services have included: sessions on conducting neighborhood surveys; preparing a survey schedule; planning and executing a neighborhood conference; leading an informal discussion; programming for future action; conducting informal home discussion groups.

Following the Mayor's Conference, the Commission inaugurated a series of subcommittee meetings with these neighborhood groups to obtain a first-hand picture of the status of intergroup relations from the views of the residents and to accept recommendations for the improvement of their neighborhoods. This program is still in progress and upon completion of these conferences a detailed report will be published.

#### "THE HUMAN RELATIONS NEWS"

The work of the Commission and its effort toward community education is as effective as the number of persons who are reached through the media of the written and spoken word. In August, 1956, the Commission distributed 3,500 copies of the first issue of its publication, Human Relations News. This bulletin, published bi-monthly, is a summary of facts and trends in human relations and civil rights on the local and national scenes. The second issue, published in October, was distributed to the Newark community including all doctors, dentists, clergymen, also to libraries and human relations agencies throughout the country. An evaluation card was enclosed with the bulletin on which the reader was asked to rate the issue and to give his comments or suggestions. The return cards indicated that 99% of the readers rated the Human Relations News favorably and only 1% responded negatively.

This bi-monthly bulletin has become one of the standard tools for the Commission's continuing job of community education.

#### SCHOLARSHIPS TO WORKSHOPS

A large part of the program of the Mayor's Commission on Group Relations is an educational job; it is directed toward informing Newark's citizens of the State and City policy against prejudice and discrimination. This is a complex topic and requires much effort on the part of the Commission and other public and private agencies, as well as the general community. Much of this educational program is initiated and carried out by the Commission, but it realizes that many more people can be reached through competent community leaders in their own groups.

For the purpose of training and developing such leaders, the Commission sponsors and directs leadership training courses, workshops and institutes of its own and cooperates in the programs offered by other agencies. Scholarship aid is awarded to qualified Newark residents to attend these workshops and institutes to equip them for leadership roles in their own communities.

This year, eight City employees were awarded scholarships to attend the annual one-week workshops at Rutgers University in July. Five persons attended the annual Community Leaders Workshop; three attended the Advanced Workshop on Modern Trends in Human Relations. A broad cross-section of persons from various parts of the country, of different racial, cultural and religious backgrounds, from many social and occupational levels spent a week on the study and discussion of community problems. Specialists and professionals in the field of human relations manned these workshops as consultants to the participants.

The Commission recommended a young Newark resident, Miss Betty Harris, for a scholarship grant to attend the Encampment for Citizenship at Riverdale, New York. This is a six-week annual summer program consisting of workshops, discussions, lectures, institutes and field trips to develop youth leadership. The award winner made such an excellent record at the Encampment that the Commission was assured the opportunity to recommend other Newark youths in the future.

#### LEADERSHIP TRAINING IN COMMUNITY RELATIONS

In cooperation with the Adult Education Committee of the YM-YWCA, the Commission conducted this ten week course during the Fall as a part of the "Y" adult education program.

A cross-section of 15 representative persons from various groups and neighborhoods participated in this workshop in which the most modern techniques of group dynamics were used. Each participant was given a chance to present a problem with which he was concerned, to be discussed and resolved by the workshopppers with the assistance and advice of experts and professionals in the field of human relations.

In an evaluation of the ten sessions, the workshopppers rated the course very good and expressed a desire to have this course or a similar workshop offered in the spring of 1957.

#### POLICE TRAINING COURSE IN HUMAN RELATIONS

For the third consecutive year, the Staff has conducted a four hour course in human relations for approximately 142 recruit policemen in training at the Newark Police Academy. The men are given basic information on the New Jersey Law Against Discrimination, issues in the field of civil rights and human relations which relate to their work. Most of the time was spent in group discussion. During these sessions the recruits were given the opportunity to raise questions and problems of human relations which they are likely to face as policemen. The best workshop techniques were utilized in lieu of the lecture method, in order to give each man an opportunity to participate in the discussion and to raise any questions with which he was concerned.

Each section was given the opportunity to evaluate the four hour session on a rating scale and to express what he had learned from the course. More than 85% of the men rated the sessions either very fine, good or all right, 14% fair and 1% no good. The majority of the rating sheets stated that the most significant phase of the workshop was the problem clinic during which they were able to solve delicate human relations problems involved in police work.

#### EXECUTIVE LUNCHEON MEETINGS

During 1956 the Mayor's Commission on Group Relations continued to serve as coordinator of weekly and monthly luncheon meetings of the Directors and Secretaries of the various human relations agencies in Newark. We met to discuss current problems of mutual interest and to plan for constructive action, where necessary.

The end result of these meetings has been a closer relationship among all groups and a cooperative approach to community issues. As a result of the frequent exchange of information on activities pertaining to civil rights in Newark and the nation, we jointly sponsored "A Day of Dedication and Prayer".

Some of the organizations of this informal luncheon group are:

American Assn. for the United Nations, Newark Chapter  
American Jewish Committee  
American Jewish Congress  
Anti-Defamation League, B'nai B'rith  
CIO, Civil Rights Division  
Division Against Discrimination, State Dept. of Education  
Essex County Intergroup Council  
Fuld Neighborhood House  
NAACP, Newark Branch  
National Conference of Christians & Jews  
Newark Housing Authority, Tenant Relations Division  
New Jersey Afro-American  
New Jersey Herald News  
Urban League of Essex County

#### A DAY OF DEDICATION AND PRAYER

In December of 1955 the Negro citizens of Montgomery, Alabama, began a boycott of city buses which very quickly gained nationwide attention. A group of national leaders conceived the idea of setting aside a day to express sympathy with this valiant passive protest against segregation. March 28th was selected for this nationwide, voluntary observance which was to be known as "Deliverance Day of Prayer".

A group of 27 civic, community and human relations agencies, religious and labor organizations co-operated to sponsor a public forum at the Essex House in observance of this Day. The Mayor's Commission was the coordinating agency for this program.

Principal speakers at the forum were J. Waites Waring, former judge of the U.S. District Court in Charleston, S. C., and Dr. E. Franklin Frazier, Howard University. Several local clergymen, Chairman C. Willard Heckel and other community leaders participated. Approximately 1200 persons attended this meeting.



EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Public Addresses by Staff and Speakers Bureau

<u>Number of Groups</u>	<u>Nature of Group</u>	<u>Approximate Audience</u>
21	Religious Groups	2,240
45	General Conferences and Forums	1,950
6	Elementary and High School Groups	2,150
2	Teachers Meetings	50
4	Adult Education Courses	220
6	Parent Teacher Associations	1,520
27	Women's Organizations	1,700
8	Commission Meetings	500
2	College Students	60
2	Public Celebrations	5,400
25	Neighborhood Councils, etc.	620
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148	Total of All Groups	16,210

STATISTICS ON  
THE ACTION PROGRAM AND  
OUR DAY TO DAY JOB

The foregoing special events and activities are the more dramatic highlights of the past year's educational effort. But the routine functions of the Commission can be understood only when the day to day job is spelled out in greater detail, because the major portion of staff time is consumed in direct services to individuals and organizations.

These services fall into four categories:

- 50     Investigations of complaints not covered by the Anti Discrimination Law of the State of New Jersey. Also referrals from the Division Against Discrimination of complaints they cannot process.
- 977    Consultations and advisory sessions with organizations and individuals on matters pertaining to the elimination of prejudice and discrimination, as well as the improvement of group relations.
- 56     Conferences with civic and social agencies on matters which relate to the peace and welfare of the City of Newark: Juvenile delinquency, recreation, housing, health, unemployment, etc.
- 214    Programs planned, speeches delivered or discussions conducted by the Staff and Speakers Bureau of the Commission.

Topics most frequently used were:

- 1.    The work of the Mayor's Commission on Group Relations.
- 2.    The Psychology of Prejudice.
- 3.    Human Rights in the United States Today, A Balance Sheet.
- 4.    Private Housing and Changing Neighborhoods.
- 5.    The Organization and Function of Community Councils and Mayor's Commissions.

In addition to the above areas of specialization, the staff of the Commission is prepared to give advice on setting up courses in Leadership Development, Group Process and the training of Discussion Leaders.